

CLINICAL EXAMINATION OF PATIENTS—With Notes on Laboratory Diagnosis. By John Forbes, M.D., M.R.C.P., Physician to the Wrexham Hospitals, and W. N. Mann, M.D., F.R.C.P., Assistant Physician to Guy's Hospital. The Williams and Wilkins Company, Baltimore, 1950. \$4.50.

This is the latest in a series of small English exports which the Williams and Wilkins Company has been offering for American consumption. Written by two teachers from Guy's Hospital Medical School, it is an elementary book for English students in a stage comparable to second-year American medical students.

The book is generally good. As an introduction to diagnosis, it is thorough, clear and selective. At the end of each chapter on clinical examination there is a summary giving concise directions of procedure for the student to follow. The section on radiology of the heart may be cited as an example of good diagrammatic teaching. On the other hand, there is a tendency to oversimplification. For instance, the exercise tolerance test, which certainly has a place in practice and teaching, is summarily dismissed as "now deservedly fallen into disuse" (page 79). The loading dose for the glucose test (page 287) is given as a single specimen of 50 grams rather than 100 grams (given either singly or in two doses) which is favored in most American laboratories.

The volume can be recommended for comparison with American texts, although it has too much of a local flavor for general use.

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THE LIVER, Porta Malorum (The Gateway to Disease). By Kasper Blond, M.D., L.R.C.P., L.R.C.S., L.R.F.P.S., Late First Assistant of I and II Surgical Dept., Allg. Krankenhaus, Vienna, and David Haler, M.B., D.C.P., Hon. Consulting Pathologist, Westminster Hospital, The Williams and Wilkins Company, Baltimore, 1950. \$5.00.

This book attempts to show that an inefficiently functioning liver is the common factor in a number of apparently diverse states, including gastrointestinal ulceration, hemorrhoids, varicose veins, cholecystitis, nephritis, ulcerative colitis, jaundice, toxemia of pregnancy and allergic disease. In setting up this theory the authors talk bravely of getting away from preconceptions. They then fall back almost immediately on the Ancients and the pre-microscopic pathologists for authority. Such complex and tortured reasoning reminds one of certain 19th century philosophers.

The opening chapters, like Chapter I on Vasa Privata and Vasa Publica and Chapter II on the gallbladder, are intriguing if unconventional. They present the hypothesis that all organs are provided with one pair of blood vessels to nourish the tissues proper (i.e., at rest) and a second pair to supply blood during periods of work. In the case of the liver the portal vein and the bile ducts represent a one-way system of circulation which supplies the liver with blood during periods of work, whereas the hepatic artery and vein nourish it at rest.

The iconoclastic portion of the book is perhaps the best. The authors call attention to various incompletely solved problems in the hepatic and biliary systems.

As soon as they present their principal hypothesis, they speak like religious fanatics with a body of dogma to be taken on faith without support of scientific fact. The reader may judge the core of the theory in the authors' words: "All disorders of life (page 69) derive from three possible sources. The first is trauma, the two others being the entrance of poisons in the widest sense of the word by inhalation into the air passages, or by swallowing. All chemical toxins and germs enter the intestine with the intake of food, liquids or drugs, all of which have to pass through the liver filter. It is our opinion that all abdominal disorders originate from liver damage. It is possible for toxins to enter

the metabolic organs of absorption only from the absorbing surface of the intestinal tract, and thence via the portal circulation to reach the liver. By accepting our hypothesis, we shall be able to understand that a disease of one organ only is impossible, and that such single organ diseases do not exist outside our imagination or our text-books. . . .

"The solution (page 138) lies in the primary metabolic or bacterial intoxication of the liver which results in portal back-pressure. The latter may cause venous congestion in any of the organs drained by the portal vein. In some cases ulcers of the stomach develop on a varicose base; in others thrombophlebitis of the appendicular or cystic veins follows, or a chronic induration of the pancreas may develop. All these so-called clinical diseases are signs and symptoms of a disorder of the liver which involves one or more organs drained by the portal vein."

Such dogma is repeated over and over again with minor variation for angina pectoris, pancreatitis, asthma, hyperthyroidism and other conditions. The authors jump from syndrome to syndrome, not finishing one before they leap to the next. They condemn pathologists for following "Virchow's absurd theory," then present their own theories with insufficient morphological basis.

Incidentally, the literature quoted is with rare exception before 1935 and chiefly German. The authors ignore the great body of work of the past 15 years—work which does away with many of their objections to older theories.

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THROMBOEMBOLIC CONDITIONS AND THEIR TREATMENT WITH ANTICOAGULANTS. By Charles D. Marple, M.D., Assistant Clinical Professor of Medicine, University of California School of Medicine, San Francisco; and Irving S. Wright, M.D., Professor of Clinical Medicine, Cornell University Medical College. Charles C. Thomas, Publisher, Springfield, Illinois, 1950. 418 pages. \$8.50.

This well-published, if expensive, volume reviews in adequate detail material from the large number of contributions which have recently appeared concerning thromboembolism and its treatment by anticoagulants. The first two-thirds of the book contains sections on thromboembolic phenomena in general, mechanisms of intramuscular clotting, rationale for the use of anticoagulants, their clinical use, technics for their administration, their complications, failures and abuses, etc. So rapidly have new papers appeared that an additional one-third of the book (about one hundred pages) repeats the subject matter of the earlier sections, but covering work published in late 1948 and 1949. An appendix discusses pertinent methods.

With its extensive bibliography, this volume represents a splendid survey of the field designated by its title. One is disappointed, perhaps, by its failure to present any report by the American Heart Association's Committee for Evaluation of Anticoagulants in the Treatment of Coronary Thrombosis with Myocardial Infarction on material analyzed since that group's preliminary report in December 1948. The authors, who are members of that committee, are well qualified by experience in this field.

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THE 1950 YEAR BOOK OF DRUG THERAPY (October, 1949-September, 1950). By Harry Beckman, M.D., Director, Department of Pharmacology, Marquette University School of Medicine. The Year Book Publishers, Chicago, 11, 1950.

This small selective summary of the medical literature for the past year, with editorial comment, will enable the busy practitioner to consign to the waste basket the numerous good or bad (but necessarily biased) pamphlets of the drug houses. With this handy reference, he can sleep soundly without fear that he will be overlooking some important new drug or method of therapy.

Recommended.